NOVEMBER, 1957

Ballet TODAY

1/6

PERYL GREY

Ballet TODAY

Cover Portrait
Beryl Grey in Giselle. *Photo: Houston Rogers.*

Photo this page:
Raissa Struchkova and Alexander Lapauri photographed during an actual performance last year by Mike Davis

(*The film of the Bolshoi Ballet now showing in London includes* Walpurgisnacht, *from which this scene is taken.*)

CONTENTS

No. 9 **VOL. 10**

Backstage	3
News of Dancers Around the World	4
London Ballet Month	8
The Month's Programmes	8
Interview with George Skibine	9
The Grammar of the Dance	10
The Australian Tour	11
Men in Ballet—Bjorn Holmgren	15
New Books	16
New Recordings	19
Young Dancers	23

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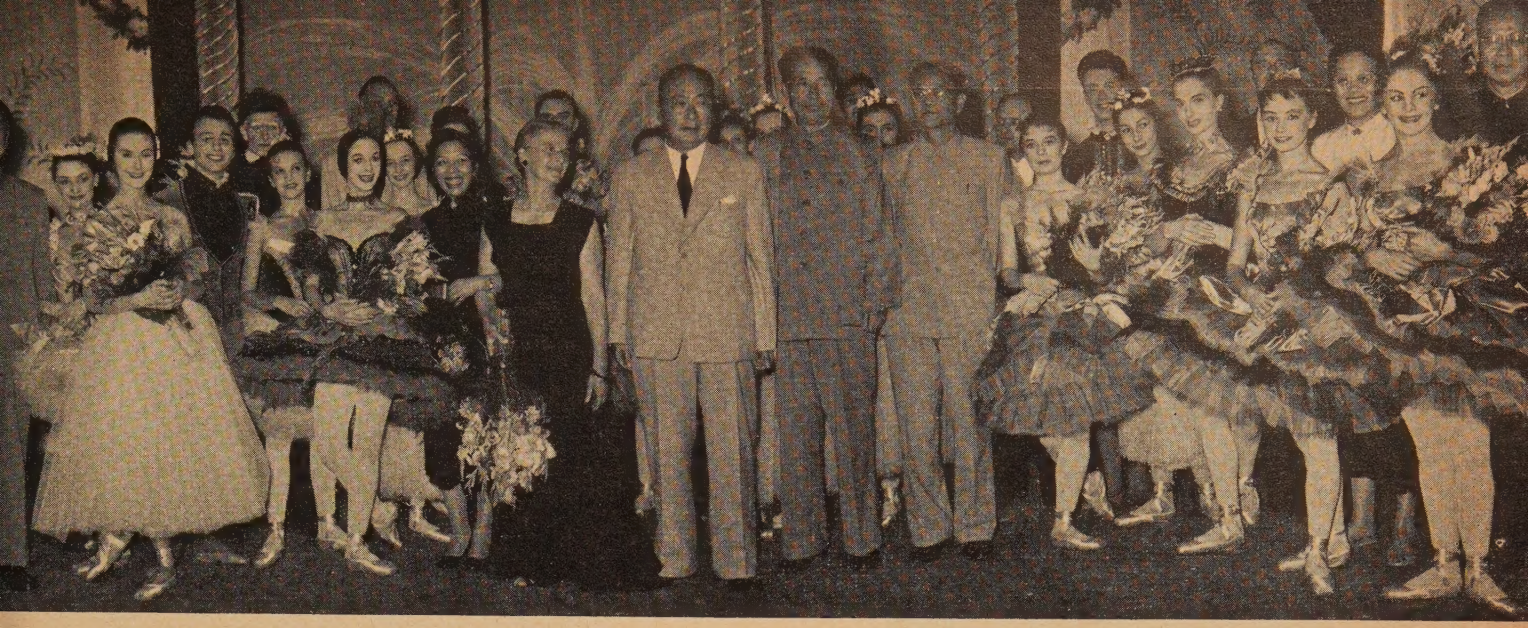


First night photograph of the Ballet Rambert in Peking, where they commenced their two months' tour of China. In the centre with Madame Rambert is Premier Chen Yi, and other Government officials.

AT regular intervals our ballet companies and dancers say goodbye to London and go off on foreign tours. Every now and then a small paragraph will appear in the newspapers giving very brief details of their opening in some big city, but that is all and then there is silence until they return to London again.

Even when they do return we hear very little about their triumphs, they are not considered very often to be headline material in their own country, but I feel it is a pity that the tremendous welcome our dancers receive abroad is not fully known here. In writing the article in this issue of Fonteyn's visit to Australia I was astounded at the furore the press created there over the visit of the ballerina. It is true that the British press made a similar brouhaha about the Bolshoi, but that was partly because very few artists had come from behind the Iron Curtain for so many years.

The prestige our dancers bring to Britain is incalculable. The friendship and affection they create in each city they visit does more to bind the peoples of the world together than any organisation has ever been able to do. Their charm and modesty is more likely to impress the ordinary man-in-the-street in other countries than any delegation or representative. This fact is now recognised by the various cultural organisations who bring Companies of their own countrymen to Britain and elsewhere, and have now commenced, as in the case of the visit of the Ballet Rambert to China, to sponsor a British Company to visit their country.

As Editor of this magazine I am being invited to an ever increasing number of receptions held for the purposes of promoting cultural relations between various countries. During the last few months alone I have been to such parties at the Polish, Chinese, Russian and Japanese Embassies.

This year has been a most eventful one. Our dancers have visited amongst others Turkey, Australia, China, South Africa, and in December Beryl Grey will dance in Russia. In our next issue will be published a special feature "with our Dancers round the World", in which will be recorded the events of the year with photographs of the dancers at work and at play.

BERYL GREY

After a highly successful tour in South Africa Beryl Grey returned to this country on the 5th October. At the end of November Beryl flies out to Moscow where she will give two performances, dancing in *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*. She then goes to Leningrad and Kiev, and ends her appearances in Russia with two further performances in Moscow.

SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

The Royal Ballet (formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet) will give their first season at the Royal Opera House, London from 26th December to 18th January. Nine performances will be given, and it is hoped that the repertory will include new ballets by John Cranko and Kenneth Macmillan. Whether these will be ready in time for the Christmas season is as yet uncertain (at the time of going to press) but Peter Wright's new ballet *The Blue Rose* will be one of the new works which will be performed. Peter Wright joined the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in January, 1949 and remained with them as a dancer until 1955, he also appeared with them as a guest artist in 1956. More recently he has been Ballet Master of the opera ballets at the Sadler's Wells Theatre.

FESTIVAL BALLET

Although Flemming Flindt is on leave at the moment, it is pretty certain that he will be returning to the company when they open at Festival Hall in December, and it is hoped that Toni Lander will return at the same time.

John Gilpin has been invited to dance at Monte Carlo in the Prince's Annual Fête in November, but programme and partner, at time of going to press, have not yet been decided.

VIOLETTE VERDY.

After her successful London season with the Ballet Rambert, Violette Verdy flew to America to become leading dancer with Ballet Theatre.

INBAL

The National Ballet and Dance Theatre of Israel gave their first performances outside their own country when they commenced a European tour on September 28th at the Hague, Holland, followed by a three-week season at Drury Lane Theatre which began on Monday, October 21st. In London there will be presented six items comprising modern Israeli dances and traditional works. Once again Sol Hurok, the great impresario, has given impetus to a company struggling for international recognition by expressing the belief that he had never in his long career seen a group of artists with greater chances for a "smash hit", and backing this opinion by taking the Company to New York following the English tour.

BALLET EXHIBITION

An exhibition of books from the 15th century to 1957, manuscripts, paintings, scores, designs and costumes all illustrating the development of the art of ballet from its origin until today will open at the National Book League, 7, Albemarle Street, London on November 7th and remain there until January 4th. Among the manuscripts are two written in the 15th century by two Italian dancing masters, William the Jew and Domenico da Ferrara, and are the earliest known codes of dance technique, and others by Karsavina, Ninette de Valois, Serge Lifar and Grigoriev. Paintings on show will include Dame Margot Fonteyn's portrait by Annigoni, Jacques-Emile Blanche's portrait of Karsavina in *The Firebird*, and others of Genée, Vestris and Taglioni. There will also be a very wide selection of the current books in print on the ballet. Many other extremely interesting exhibits will be on show, and the catalogue compiled by the organiser of the exhibition, Mr. Ivor Guest, is in itself a feast of knowledge and anecdote at which, readers of his books will know, he is an expert.

The Next issue of Ballet Today will be published on 27th November.

News of Dancers

Franz Baur as Orpheus, Natascha Trofimowa as Eurydice in Alan Carter's ballet Herr Orpheus, *at the Munich State Opera. Photo: (left) Sabine Toepffer*

Maria Fris and Rainer Köchermann. Photo: (right) Doris Dehn

GERMANY

More and more ballet activities in Germany centre around five definite cities: Berlin (Tatjana Gsovsky), Wuppertal (Erich Walter), Munich (Carter), Frankfurt and Stuttgart. The latter two cities have taken promising steps towards re-forming their ballets by calling in new choreographers and ballet-masters from abroad. Nicolas Beriosoff will replace Robert Mayer at the Württ. Staatstheater in Stut'gart, and Walter Gore has taken over from Freund at the Frankfurt Opera. Already he has staged his first contribution, *Flügel des Schlafes* (Debussy, Heckroth, Gore). This impressionist and very aesthetical piece of choreography makes you constantly walk on the edge between consciousness and the world of dreams. When the curtain goes down you wonder if it wasn't *you* who dreamed this ballet. It is amazing how Gore fills up the enormous stage with a few dancers (he exhausts them alright!), and how he skilfully disguises the technical weaknesses of the corps de ballet. His great assets are Maria Fris and Rainer Köchermann. Fris—in this ballet she is mostly carried about aloft—and communicates her wonderful concentration and poetry to the audience, while Köchermann excels with his rhythmical assuredness and balance.

Other items of the repertoire (*Lysistrata, Montmartre*) absolutely show that in the process of setting the steps the dancers had the upper hand over the choreographer. *Montmartre* is undramatical, thin, conventional, un-Parisian, dusty, humourless and too long. All there is to it is a dragging story and a revue ballabile. Irene Mann, the first character danseuse, does not satisfy the call for artistic personality. She remains among the better technicians. *Pulcinella*, however, is a very pleasant thing, colourful and witty, and shows good choreographic commonsense. Here Fris and Köchermann shine as Pulcinella and Pimpinella. They make friends with everybody in the audience.

PREMIERE IN MUNICH
Three new Stravinsky ballets

After a delay of 15 months due to Alan Carter's grave sickness, Munich has had another exciting ballet première during the State Opera Summer Festival. Alan Carter had worked tremendously hard turning out a full evening programme of his own choreography as well as his own libretti, decors and costumes—and all of it within seven months. Arnold Haskell, O. F. Regner, Derra de Moroda, Werner Egk, Fortner and (it is election time!) even the Bavarian Minister President came to see the event.

On *Capriccio* (for Piano and Orchestra, 1949 version) Carter based an abstract ballet with scenes of weird, cold, non-human characters. Is it insects that move here eccentrically creating a contrastless atmosphere of gloomy, threatening, unerotic sexuality? Carter has forced details reminiscent of Jerome Robbins (*The Cage*) and Maurice Béjart upon his group and on the soloists (Heino Hallhuber, Annette Chappell) poses entirely foreign to a conventional ballet—in spite of the outstandingly difficult rhythms—the company gave a wonderful performance, but the ballet has not been received enthusiastically. This is because there are still people who object to Stravinsky's music as "chaotic", and they unconsciously transfer their dislike of disharmonies and moods as created by Stravinsky to the ballet. In my opinion anybody trying to do *Capriccio* necessarily will arrive at a ballet resembling Carter's work, if he wants to do a good job. However, I would have wished to see the light swift parts of the music represented in the choreography in a like manner. This ballet calls for a public which does not exist!

Herr Orpheus (Orpheus–ballet music) is not based on the classic as given by Stravinsky himself and as used in Balanchine's version. Carter has given the myth his own psychological interpretation. With him the mythical events all take place in the imagination of Orpheus who is a nervous wreck through the catastrophe which killed his wife. While being quietened down with drugs he struggles with himself against realisation of what is an unbearable reality. In this work Carter moves you intensely if you let him. The parts of Orpheus, Eurydice and the Dream Spirit—while not being glamorous parts—bring out the best of Franz Baur, Munich's best character dancer, Natascha Trofimowa and Will Spindler. Trofimowa has the magical inspired liveliness and touching gracefulness that is the mark of a truly great personality. Carter's best scenes are those in his psychological Hades. Here he makes a very complex use of the corps de ballet turning it into pale shadows which are reflected in the decor. Too bad that this ballet is introduced and ended with over-realistic pantomimes.

The evening is closed with *Feuilleton* (a musical and dance cocktail) that does not relieve the tension of the first part of the programme as much as desired. Here Carter's libretto gives him a chance to make fun of all kinds of newspaper critics—those who criticise circuses, books, fireworks and movies. The series has two real hits. With the Circus (Circus Polka) and Ebony Concerto he again proves his special talent for children's groups and jazz steps. However, it is inexplicable to me that there is a sequence called "Ode" which is entirely unfitting for Carter's purposes from every viewpoint. It is a 10 minute pantomime about a depressingly sad, cheap, story that needs a lot of programme note explanation. I think that *Feuilleton* is too long by just those 10 minutes.

The surprise of the evening was not so much the choreography as the prefection of the corps de ballet. During the whole evening only experts were able to tell from the faces who was dancing: in *Cappricio* lips painted black and faces unrecognisable, in *Orpheus* pale and uniform, in *Feuilleton* faces blacker than to be found around the Congo river.

Around the World

Photo: (left) Alicia Alonso and André Eglevsky in Coppelia *at the Greek Theatre, Los Angeles*

Photo: (right) José de la Vega

This loss of individuality was perfectly matched, and underlined through the wonderful equality of movements and line. Arnold Haskell could not believe his eyes. As a matter of fact, he did not see the company he saw three years ago: He saw the crop grown on Alan's fields. With the public, Carter's come-back wasn't a triumph, but it was a thing to fight over and discuss heatedly. Those of course who had come to see pure lines and pure dancing in the sense of conventional aesthetics—fled the arena. There were those who blamed him for touching a sacred myth—and others preferred to see a less intellectual, not so analytical interpretation of music. Have you ever seen everyone pleased?

For the rest of the year the company is losing Heino Hallhuber who is going to tour the Americas as first solist with Janine Charrat. Other prospects: Alan Carter has already started working on Milhaud's *Salade* and Britten's *Prince of the Pagodas* both due in late autumn.

José Udaeta has given a four weeks course in Spanish dancing—the best course yet, according to his report.

WILFRIED HOFMANN.

CHICAGO

Eight soloists of the Royal Danish Ballet appeared on six programmes of the Chicago Symphony toward the end of the orchestra's summer season in the pavilion at Ravinia Park, a fashionable suburban area north of Chicago on the Lake Michigan shore. Their repertory was almost evenly divided between ballets by or in the tradition of Bournonville and ballets by or in the tradition of Petipa. The Bournonville tradition is, of course, the Dane's own style of ballet and at first glance it is understandable that they are more at home in it than in the Russian style of Petipa. But if one has seen the rapidity with which other non-Russian style ballet companies (notably those at the operas in Vienna and Milan) have assimilated Petipa ballets into their repertories, one wonders why the Danish dancers seem so uncomfortable in *Swan Lake* or *Sleeping Beauty*. From Fokine in the 20's to Volkova in the 50's of this century, the Royal Danish Ballet has had frequent contact with choreographers and teachers in the Petipa tradition. Is there a basic incompatibility between Bournonville dancers and Petipa dancers which does not exist between the latter and those performing in the style of Telle (Vienna) or Cecchetti (Milan)? Or is there a temperamental incompatibility rather than one of training? It would take much ballet class and psychological observation to give an answer. From the audience point of view, however, I noticed this—in ballets of the Bournonville tradition each movement is isolated. The time values of stops between movements are as important as the dynamic values of movements themselves in creating the overall style. This contrast with the Petipa tradition which has tended more and more toward the continuity of movement. One motion flows into the other; there are pauses rather than stops and the stream is broken by opposing movements.

Of the actual choreographies, the great popular successes were Bournonville's *Flower Festival* pas de deux danced with great refinement by Kirsten Ralov and Fredbjorn Bjornnson and excerpts from Hans Beck's version of *Coppelia* with Inge Sand as a mischievous, passionate Swanilda. Bjornsson's *Bergensiana* has snob appeal for those who recognise all its humorous allusions to other ballets, but after everything has been identified, repeat performances seem dull.

Chicago Ballet Guild's annual *Stars of the Dance* midnight gala was held in the Terrace Cassino of the Morrison Hotel on August 10th. The varied programme of many forms of dancing was not up to the usual standard of previous years. Barbara Steele (of the Chicago Opera Ballet) in Ruth Page's *Beethoven Sonata*, the Snowflakes pas de deux from *The Nutcracker* by Dido Sayers (New York City Ballet) and Alan Howard (Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo), Buster Cooper's expressionistic dance to the song *Water Boy*, and Valerie Bettis' recitation of the poem *The Desperate Heart*, were the only items which stood above the general level of competent mediocrity.

GEORGE JACKSON.

LOS ANGELES

Over twenty-one thousand people went to see James A. Doolittle's first production in the United States of the full-length *Coppelia* when it was presented at the Greek Theatre in Los Angeles from the 7th to the 11th August, with Alicia Alonso as Swanilda, André Eglevsky as Franz and Niels Bjørn Larsen (of the Royal Danish Ballet) as Dr. Coppelius. Decor was by Rita Glover and the musical director for the occasion was Ben Steinberg from New York.

Miss Alonso travelled from Cuba to stage and direct the entire production. This was the first time she has danced this role in the United States, and also marked her debut as a director.

As reported in our July issue, Alicia Alonso terminated her contract with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, with whom she has been guest artist for the past two years, when the Company concluded its appearance at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, during May this year.

SPAIN

Another ex-Pilar Lopez dancer to start up on his own is 25 year old José de la Vega who comes from Utrera. With two other dancers he has been contracted by the Jeunesses Musicales de Française for two months commencing 8th October in the North of France, and then tours through Tunis, etc. ending about Christmas. He plans to increase his group and form his own company.

He was with the Pilar Lopez Company for two years and during the 1956 season, danced in *Triana*, *Love is a Magician*, etc.

News of Dancers Around the World

(*Continued*)

VENICE

Ballet's contribution to the 20th International Festival of contemporary music was confined to one programme given by the Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas on 24th and 25th September at the Fenice Opera House. The lovely theatre, decorated with gifts of rose bouquets on the ledge of each box, was filled by an international audience that gave the impression of having come to the ballet more as part of their tourists' itinerary than for love of the art itself. The second performance however was well received.

The first work was *Constantia* to music from the Chopin F minor piano concerto, played with romantic fervour and considerable brilliance by Jean Michel Damase. William Dollar's choreography, classical and suitably varied, traces a slight but sufficient theme from the moods of the music, providing contrasted roles for the two girl soloists, Maria Santestevan and Genia Melikova.

I can scarcely recall more perfect harmony of movement than that displayed in the Andante pas de deux, danced by Santestevan and Serge Golovine. These dancers are ideally suited to each other; indeed, so sympathetically blended are their movements that the partnership transcends ordinary standards, and tends towards sublimity. Unforgettable are Santestevan's slow turns with alternating developpé and attitude, either supported or performed solo. Golovine's variation displayed pirouettes and tours en l'air of unbelievable speed and elegance; every movement he makes is grace personified. One lift only marred an otherwise perfect performance, when Golovine after a solo carries the girl off the stage, supporting her on his breast. There seemed no reason either for any lift at that particular moment.

Genia Melikova afforded a good contrast; brilliant and forceful, antagonistic to the lovers; and the four coryphées—Beatriz Consuelo, Solange Golovina, Margo Miklosy, and Olga Makcheeva, each supported by two partners, performed flying and gliding diagonals with astonishing speed and precision.

The costumes (A. Lafauvie) were passable, but the peplums of the two soloists should have been cut on the slant; as it was they merely looked like gym tunics. As for the back-drop, luckily the dancing was so good that I don't think anyone noticed that it was nearly falling to pieces.

Doña Ines de Castro devised and choreographed by Ana Ricarda, is a danced drama in five short scenes depicting the tragic love of Don Pedro of Portugal for the ill-fated Ines. Here again is a ballet so well constructed that only the merest programme note is needed to place the characters in their historical background.

Ana Ricarda is to be congratulated on the rare feat of successfully combining the art of the dance with its sister arts. The lovely music by Joaquin Serra, the decors and supremely beautiful costumes of Celia Hubbard (executed by Karinska) are both inseparable from the choreography; the three elements form a whole and nothing preponderates. Not only this, but Ana Ricarda, who appears as the Infanta of Novarre, provides yet a fourth element—that of staged orchestration, whereby, by means of the most brilliant castanet playing, she is able to make the character almost speak. For instance, the way in which the castanets reveal the rage of the frustrated Infanta, is quite as potent as speech, whilst the trilled diminuendo to the merest whisper is used in anticipation of such an outburst, thereby creating a more forceful effect than is possible for the voice.

Nina Vyroubova is ideally suited to the role of Doña Ines, as is Nicholas Polanjenko to that of Don Pedro. Both these artists bring the greatest sincerity of feeling to the enactment of these roles, so that the characters live and are convincing. Not so the King of Portugal as played by Don Spottswood. He acts poorly, and his make-up suggests more some timid lackey who has been dressed up in the wrong costume, than an intriguing and ageing King.

A special word of praise must be accorded to the three Moorish dancers so quaintly portrayed by Beatriz Consuelo, David Seillier and Willy Maurer. The beating of the tiny side-drums strapped on either side of the waist gave surely just the right mediaeval touch at this point.

Quite frankly, I found the Tarasiana pas de deux, danced by Rosella Hightower and Serge Golovine, disappointing. Whenever the two danced together Hightower dwarfed her partner, a fault accentuated by the addition of a white osprey plume to her wig, which moreover did not suit her. But whenever they danced alone we were treated to an exhibition of pure technique possibly unsurpassed at the moment.

The music in variation form for this ballet sounded remarkably well unified despite the fact that three composers, Gluck, Mozart and Tchaikovsky had a hand in it.

The evening's entertainment ended with *The Prisoner of the Caucasus*. What a wonderful ballet this could be if it were only presented the other way round! Briefly, what one sees is this: Scene 1: The fight; the Russian officer is wounded and captured. Scene 2: Celebration of the Caucasian's triumph; the girl (Jacqueline Moreau) takes pity on the officer. Scene 3: The totally irrelevant appearance of an eagle, the releasing of the officer by the girl, and her subsequent remorse and suicide.

However fine Pushkin's poem may be, this certainly does not make for good theatre; it is so obviously putting the cars before the horse. What it all amounts to it that after a magnificent series of dances in the first two scenes (possibly only rivalled by the dances in *Prince Igor*) an insipid and far too long pas de deux brings the ballet to a close together with the irrelevant introduction of a very pantomime eagle by way of make-weight. What a pity, for if George Skibine would only reconsider he might see (what is plain to me) that by cutting out the eagle and making Scene 3 into Scene 1 thereby finishing with those glorious Caucasian dances, he could achieve a coup de ballet almost without precedent. I would like the opportunity of discussing this with him in greater detail.

Owing to the indisposition of Vladimir Skouratoff the part of the Russian officer was taken by Georges Zoritch. Georges Goviloff danced with all the impetuous élan and abandon which his role as chief of the Caucasians demanded; whilst Olga Makcheeva and David Seillier danced indeed like flickering flames of fury and passion respectively. What an ensemble! And what decors the great crimson and violet-blue curtains (Scene 2) devised by Wakhevitch, allied to Katchatourian's fierce and colourful music.

The music for all these ballets was played by the orchestra of the Teatro Fenice, most ably and sympathetically directed by that splendid chef d'orchestre, Gustave Cloez.

ROBERT PATERSON.

VIENNA

Christl Zimmerl of the Vienna Staatsoper is to be given the rôle of Medusa in the ballet of that name which is to be presented in Vienna during November. The choreography is by Erika Hanka, music by Gottfried v. Einem, and costumes by Wakhevitch. Willy Dirtl will take the role of Perseus and Richard Adama the blind sailor.

CANADA

Several works new to the repertoire of the National Ballet of Canada will be presented when the Canadian company opens its annual international tour in Hamilton, Ontario, Monday, November 4th. Present plans call for the company to make its most extensive tour to date, with bookings tentatively arranged through until next May.

Eleven Ontario and Quebec cities will be visited during the early part of the season. Early in February it embarks on a large United States tour to embrace some 50 cities from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast including Los Angeles and San Francisco (the Opera House).

Fokine's *Carnaval*, and Walter Gore's *Winter Night*, and dances from *The Sleeping Princess*, will be presented for the first time by a Canadian company. An original work by Grant Strate (a company soloist and choreographer) is entitled *The Willow*.

In December the company will appear on a national television network hookup with the first two acts of *Coppelia*, and the Aurora Pas de Deux and the Rose Adagio from *The Sleeping Princess*.

Several new dancers have been added to the company this season, bringing the total to 40. Celia Franca, artistic director and leading dancer, has accepted three from England who arrived recently in this country. They are Cecily Paige, Colin Worth and Hans Meister. Musical director, George Crum is again in charge of the touring orchestra.

Miss Franca announces that Earl Kraul,

Christl Zimmerl leaving the stage door with Richard Adama, American soloist, after a recent performance at the Vienna Staatsoper

Ana Ricarda, choreographer of Doña Ines de Castro, *in the role of the Infanta of Novarre*
Photo: Gyenes

Lilian Jarvis and Angela Leigh will dance the leads in the company's full-length production of *Swan Lake*. Mr. Kraul will dance Prince Siegfried; Miss Jarvis dances Odette and Miss Leigh Odile. As in the past Lois Smith will be partnered by David Adams, premier danseur, also in *Swan Lake*. It is the first time the Canadian company has been able to present two casts in the leads of the four-act ballet.

Cities to be visited in Ontario and Quebec: Hamilton, November 4th, 5th; St. Catharines, November 6th, 7th; Kitchener, November 8th; Belleville, November 9th; Ottawa, November 12th, 13th; Sherbrooke, November 14th; Quebec City, November 16th; Montreal, two weeks opening November 18th; Toronto, four week, opening January 6th, 1958; London, Ont., a week opening February 3rd and Windsor, February 9th. Then follows the U.S. tour.

PARIS

The choreographic season in Paris opened with *Caravana*, a ballet in Spanish style at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. These performances passed almost unnoticed—and with reason. In fact, there was nothing either Spanish or artistic about this caravan, which disappeared off the horizon without causing any regrets.

Paris has always remembered the first visit of the enchanting dancers from Bali to the Théâtre Marigny in 1953. Today, Marioh in person, the master choreographer of the most famed ballet of Bali is appearing on the immense stage at the Théâtre Chaillot. He has with him his famous pupil Gosti Ngurah Raka who is also at the same time his direct artistic heir. The two female stars of the company are respectively nine and twelve years old. Wayan Begeg directs the accompaniment. Paris certainly admired the suppleness of these child dancers, their expressive hands and their flowing arms as they performed sacred gestures. However, much of what these dances aimed to express was lost on the public. Because of this, there was a certain monotony. Their interpretation in dance terms of the phenomena of life is amazing by its very strangeness. For example "L'Epanouissement de la Fleur", a solo danced by Marioh is an outburst of vigour, a battle with an invisible enemy.

The celebrated American dancer and choreographer Doris Humphrey accompanied José Limon on tour with Pauline Koner, Lucas Hoving and a group of twelve other dancers. It would not be true to say that the performances at the Théâtre Marigny had a great success. However, they did not leave the public indifferent—far from it. Every evening the faithful followers of José Limon increased in number. Paris has always been unwilling to accept Modern Dance. However, one cannot deny that the art of José Limon exists whether one likes it or not. And how can one help but admire Pauline Koner who is a very beautiful dancer? *Emperor Jones*, *The Traitor* and *There is a Time* by José Limon aroused much interest in Paris as well as the *Moor's Pavane*. *Concertino* by Pergolese danced by Pauline Koner also had success. If the public as a whole did not pack the Marigny in Paris, José Limon certainly aroused interest.

Antonio and his company had a triumphant season at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. His new production is marvellous. In Paris at any rate, we have not for a very long time witnessed a Spanish performance of such high standard. In the first place, Antonio has definitely abandoned dances in separate items. He presents real ballets, or rather a series of items closely linked which form a complete whole. One cannot but single out an excellent pas de quatre composed of classical Spanish steps and danced by Rosita Segovia, Carmen Rollan, Graciella Vazquez and Alicia Diaz. Decors and costumes are in admirable artistic taste. His corps de ballet is sparkling with life, youth and charm. This presentation has increased still more the fame of Antonio. He has even sacrificed his famous Zapateado, which had probably become too banal for him as an artist. Whilst taking every care to maintain the authenticity of the Spanish dance, he has created something truer than folklore. Always a great dancer, Antonio has proved that he is also a man of the threatre in the true sense of the word. The artistic dignity of the spectacle is incomparable.

After a season in Latin America, the Ballets de Paris 1957, led by Milorad Miskovitch and under the artistic direction of Irène Lidova opened at the Théâtre Marigny. We were thus able to see again Irène Skorik who has not danced in Paris for a long time, partnered by Milorad Miskovitch in a grand pas de deux by George Skibine to the music of Pelléas a symphonic poem by Gabriel Fauré. If the choreography does not offer anything particularly new, Skorik is so fine, musical and beautiful that one forgets the monotony of the steps and only sees her and her partner who has a great presence. The leader of the orchestra Richard Blareau wrote the score for *Rideau Rouge* which served to introduce the various members of the company. Thus one was able to admire the astounding Marie Claire Carrié with her points of steel, Milko Sparemblek and Vassili Sulich. The spectacle also included *Promethée*, choreography by

(*contd. on page 8*)

LONDON REVIEWS

JOSÉ LIMON

THE José Limon Dance Company appeared at Sadler's Wells for a two week visit before touring several European countries, showing fourteen ballets, or dance-dramas, composed in a style of Modern Dance not previously known here. Owing to the lack of an English Modern Dance Company, many balletgoers have only the faintest idea of what "Modern" is, how it differs from ballet, why it exists in our time. No big enough argument either in defence of, or in opposition to, Modern Dance can be brought into a short article. All that Modern dancers ask is that people interested in ballet, and in dancing generally, should see Modern dance—whether by Jooss, Graham, Cramer, Humphrey or Limon—and so decide whether it has an appeal for them.

Too much has been said against Modern Dance by those diehards who are busy protecting ballet from all sorts of impurities, but, as always, their arguments are worthless because promoted by self interest. Limon's training was a mixture of ballet and the American style perfected in the Denishawn School in California; most of his works have choreography by Doris Humphrey, some are his own.

As in all good Modern, the dancers have superb flexibility; their torsoes, arms, legs, and necks can achieve an elasticity that one does not see used much in Ballet. Most dances are in shoes, though a few are barefoot; the decor is starkly simple but extended by clever lighting and some first class music is excellently played by a small orchestra.

The Traitor, Night Spell, Ruins and Visions, Emperor Jones, are the best serious works; *New Dance, La Malinche* and *Concertino* are effective in the lyrical mode and there is a sharp satire (*Satyros*) which pulls the legs of all those who take their ballet too seriously. Apart from Limon, who dances in many works, Lucas Hoving, Pauline Koner and Betty Jones are the most outstanding performers. The little season proved to be one of the most original dance occasions seen here for a long time; some day the company should return—preferably as part of a joint group of American Modern Dancers representing the four or five most important trends in Modern techniques and production-systems.

A. V. COTON.

CHINESE CLASSICAL THEATRE

The season given at Drury Lane by the Chinese Classical Theatre from Formosa revealed a number of highly talented artists, and showed the same type of selections from the traditional repertoire of the *ching hsi* theatre as the company from Peking which played at the Palace Theatre two years ago. It was disappointing not to see the boating scene with the wonderful *tsuan pu* mime technique used to suggest boarding a boat and then rocking in it; on the other hand it was delightful to make fresh acquaintance with the play *San Cha K'ou*, with its exciting and amusing fights in darkness between the wicked innkeeper and his two guests.

Compared with older Chinese classical styles of theatre such as *k'un chü* or the related classical styles of Japan (No and Kabuki), the *ching hsi* theatre (or Peking opera, as it is sometimes known in English) is limited in range and artistically disappointing. The music is montonous: the artists use only a limited number of tunes, adapting them to different situations in the various plays, and even though the orchestra includes a number of different instruments, these are used for the most part to produce the Chinese equivalent of sound effects. Mime is well-developed, but there is very little dancing. On the other hand acrobatics reach a very high standard, and so does stylized fighting with a variety of weapons. In general the *ching hsi* theatre is seen at its best in elaborate battle scenes (where the almost incredibly gorgeous costumes are seen to good advantage) and in scenes of broad comedy.

In adapting *ching hsi* to the Western stage the Formosan producer went too far in suppressing the stage assistants (who move props and furniture in full view of the audience) and making all changes behind an act-drop. But it was a good idea to have a Chinese lady introducing each item in English: the attractive compère Tsai Chin did a very good job.

In many ways the most attractive item was a dance by a celestial being, impersonated by Hsu Lu: she kept long lengths of cloth writhing in serpentine coils around her, meanwhile singing with a clear and strong voice that showed no trace of the violent exertions of her arms. Her personality emerged more strongly than that of anyone else, apart from the remarkable artist Ho Chiu-Chen (the wicked inn-keeper). But it was also fascinating to see some fine male artists being completely feminine and convincing in female roles, as is traditional in the Chinese and Japanese theatres.

THE BULGARIANS

The Bulgarian singers and dancers to be seen at the Royal Festival Hall were not as far removed from the Chinese as one might expect—for the Bulgarians absorbed a great many oriental influences during their centuries of subjection to the Turks after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The complex rhythms and strange melodies of Bulgarian dance-music are clearly oriental in origin, showing affinities to those to be found in the dance-music of North India and Tazhikistan. Many of the Bulgarian dances are *Horos*—chain dances with the dancers linked shoulder to shoulder in lines, very like the *Kolos* of Yugoslavia: such dances are represented on ancient Greek vases, and may be well descended from the dances of ancient Greece. On the other hand the most exciting item in the Festival Hall programme, *Kukeri* (a dance showing a battle between good and evil spirits) showed striking affinities with the Morris dances of England and with Basque dances. Apart from this fine male dance, there were other violent dances in which the men stamped so spendidly that they gave one fears for the safety of the stage-planking. But a discordant note was introduced by a "production number" with a suggestion of skating. (Had the choreographer perhaps seen *Les Patineurs?*)

A more serious mistake was to be observed in the planning of the programme. Out of 28 items, only ten were dances—too small a proportion, in view of the fact that the artists often sang as they danced. Among the songs, the most intriguing was a nonsense duet in which two girls emitted sounds quite as exotic as any to be heard at Drury Lane.

FERNAU HALL.

PARIS (*Contd. from previous page*)

Maurice Béjart, music by Ohana and decors by Bernard Daydé. The harshness and primitive violence of the choreography firmly holds one's attention. Milorad Miskovitch was in full command of his rôle. Veronika Mlakar and the young Judith Dornys were the other dancers in *Promethée*. Judith Dornys is a young dancer of 16 who amazed the public a few months ago at the Festival of Aix-les-Bains. Judith Dornys has a technique well in advance of her years but her grace and her natural taste prevent her from making a display of it. She is not phenomenal but she dances very very well and that is saying something at her age!

FERDINAND REYNA.

DIARY

THE ROYAL BALLET

During November the Company will be touring the following cities: St. Louis, Dallas, Houston, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle:

THE ROYAL BALLET
(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)

W/c. 21st Oct. *King's Theatre, Edinburgh*
„ 28th „ *His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen*
„ 4th Nov. *King's Theatre, Glasgow*
„ 11th „ *Lyceum, Sheffield*
„ 18th „ *Grand Theatre, Leeds*
„ 25th „ *New Theatre, Hull*

FESTIVAL BALLET

W/c 21st Oct. *Palace Theatre, Plymouth*
„ 28th „ *Hippodrome Theatre, Bristol*
„ 4th Nov. *Empire Theatre, Sheffield*
„ 11th „ *Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham*
„ 18th „ *Palace Theatre, Manchester*
„ 2nd Dec. *Hippodrome Theatre, Brighton*

At the Royal Festival Hall, London
24th December to 11th January
A Christmas Presentation of *The Nutcracker*

THE NATIONAL BALLET AND DANCE THEATRE OF ISRAEL

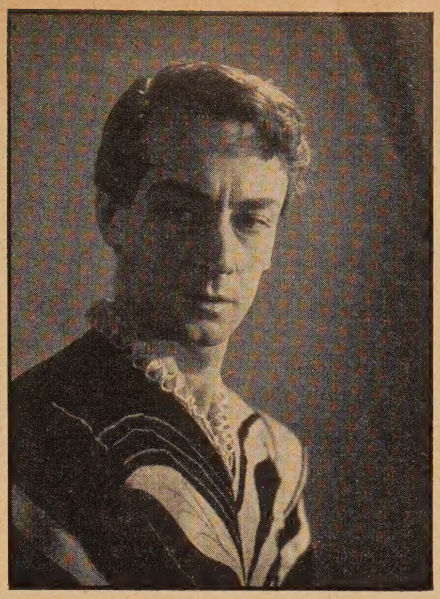
At the Drury Lane Theatre, London
Three week season commencing Monday, 21st October

EXHIBITIONS

Exhibition of Ballet Books from 15th century to the present day at the National Book League from 7th November to 4th January.

SPECIAL BALLET TODAY
INTERVIEW
with

GEORGE SKIBINE



WHATEVER facets of human endeavour the ballets of the future may choose to reflect, it is almost certain that the romantic attitude to life will play its customary part in their plot and manner of performance. Ballet, with its delicate fusion of materialism and mystique is the ideal medium for the expression of truths too fundamental to be told entirely openly. What could epitomise more clearly the myths of romance, than the never consummated kiss of the classic pas de deux?

When, it comes to defining and honouring the romantic artist however, we are often less ready to appreciate the merit of this particular branch of the ballet, especially on the male side, where in the quest for the more obvious virtue of virility the subtly shaded performance of a sensitive artist is often overlooked in favour of personality flung over the footlights at every entrance.

George Skibine is a past master of the gentle art of on-stage introspection. His lovelorn princes keep their rendezvous in a world cut off and self contained thus enabling their creator to paint a stage picture that is truly convincing because it is three dimensional.

Skibine has been steeped in the atmosphere of the ballet from his earliest childhood. Although he himself is too young to have danced with the great Diaghilev company, he knew all its stars as personal friends through his father, a member of the Russian ballet. However his own training did not begin until he was seventeen, when he joined René Blum's Russian Ballet. His first big opportunity came the same year. The company's leading male dancer was suddenly taken ill and Skibine was sent on as the faun in *L'Après-Midi*. Looking back to that momentous day Skibine says "I don't think for one moment it was a question of outstanding talent, it was just that I looked most physically right for the role. In any case, I was so nervous, I shook so much that a number of grapes fell off the wreath." Skibine talked to me in English, but a fluency in several languages is the legacy of his international upbringing. Born of Russian parents, he was brought up in France, trained as a dancer in Monte Carlo, lived in Australia, served in the American Army and has married a wife (Tallchief) who is the descendant of a Red Indian chief. "Yes, I am something of a mixture, nationally speaking" confesses the dancer. Asked what language he thought about ballet in, Skibine replied that steps always suggested themselves to him in French, the background of his ballet knowledge was Russian, but that ideas for choreography came quite independently of nationality.

In the first year of the war Skibine went to Australia to dance with de Basil, then he went to the United States and Ballet Theatre. In 1941 he joined up with the American Army. For the first week of his service he was put in an entertainments unit—and then at his own request he transferred to the infantry. Asked if he did not find the army a great change after devoting so much of his life previously to a very different career, Skibine shrugged and replied that in a major war that was the experience of many people. He did add with a twinkle however, that he thought that he adapted himself much quicker than conscripts who came from an office desk, because ballet training had kept him physically fit.

Demobilised in 1945 Skibine did not intend to go back to ballet. "I felt that it would be impossible to close such a large gap in my career as a dancer. Four years is a long time to be away from the theatre." It was however the combined forces of Anton Dolin and impresario Sol Hurok that finally persuaded Skibine that he had nothing to lose, and everything to gain by giving just one performance to see how it went. He made his return debut in the *Black Swan* pas de deux in Chicago. Then followed a tour of Central America with the Markova-Dolin group, before joining the De Cuevas ballet.

It was with the De Cuevas group that Skibine made his first attempt at choreography, a work called *Tragedy at Verona*. "Prior to 1950" said Skibine "I had never even thought of myself as a potential choreographer. I had regarded it as an immensely complex business, confined to such men of genius as Fokine and Massine." It was on the suggestion of the Marquis de Cuevas that Skibine attempted this piece. "The Marquis could not see eye to eye with any of his regular choreographers, yet a ballet was urgently needed for the coming season" Skibine explained. Panic-stricken at the idea of having to undertake such a project, Skibine went to ask the advice of master choreographer Balanchine. Their conversation went as follows:

Balanchine: "Have you the music ready for the work you have to create?"

Skibine: "Yes, the music is here."

Balanchine: "Well, listen to the music."

Skibine: "Yes, I have listened to the music."

Balanchine: "Well listen to it again."

Skibine, now somewhat impatient: "Well, when do I actually get started?"

Balanchine, with some irritation: "If you have listened thoroughly to the music and still have no ideas—I should give up the whole idea of choreography."

Today, Skibine, on the basis of that advice has become a successful choreographer. On the question of what is the first step in making a ballet he feels that the step is to get an idea which can then be shaped in dance terms. He feels that his own bent is for the romantic ballet and his definition of romantic ballet includes "not only the romantic ballets of the past like *Les Sylphides*" but also such works as *La Somnnambule* and his own *Annabel Lee*. However Skibine lays down no hard and fast rules about the right way to make a ballet. He points out "In the hands of others, it has been proved that the athletic ballet can be very successful, but I do not believe that it is right for me."

With regard to choice of music his taste is catholic with the stipulation that he finds certain types of very modern music difficult to understand.

As practically everyone in the ballet world knows, George Skibine and his ballerina wife, have two charming children, twin boys —George and Alexander, and so in his spare time George Skibine is very much the family man. "We bought a house in the country, because we thought it would be good for the children—and now we find that it is very good for us also—and in my leisure I just like to relax there with the family. Like most dancers I have always been too occupied with work to develop any regular hobby."

Asked if the boys were likely to follow in the family footsteps Skibine said "Already they follow us, they love to jump about and seem to have developed quite a sense of movement. However they have had no official training. We feel that two, is far too early to make career plans for a child. If when they are older they want to dance—I should have no objection, but the decision must be their own."

About his own future Skibine explained that he had no definite thoughts, although he naturally hoped that his stay at the Paris Opéra would be a happy one. "For me my favourite role has always been the one I am going to dance next and as for talking about the highlight of my career—well that is something I look forward to as well."

SONIA ROBERTS.

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The Grammar of the Dance

PART ONE: FOUNDATIONS OF CHOREOGRAPHY BY W. G. RAFFÉ

THE earliest extant work touching on ritual choreography known to me is a South Indian script entitled Saundarya Lahari (Ocean of Beauty) which dates from the 8th century, and is attributed to Sri Samkara-Bhagavat-Pada, a famous religious reformer. Its substance is a thousand years older. This work contains a number of choreographic ritual diagrams, the *yantra*, relevant to the Sacred Hindu Temple dance.

Many similar diagrams remain in use to this day (as for Nag Panchami Festival in Bombay) for domestic worship.

No study of dance notations, or analysis of traditional choreography, can be considered complete without a thorough knowledge of this important work, more especially as it had parallels in earlier Greek or Egyptian rites, and later in Roman worship. This Hindu work is not choreographic in our modern spectacular sense for Theatre; but the historic link for us is in the firm relation of Hellenic music and poetry to Hellenic ritual dance in the Athenian amphitheatre. Thence we trace some of our modern terms: chorus, choir, or chorister.

Much later, European works seem to begin with 15th century printed books:

La Geste des Nobles Français. Jean de Angouleme (*Paris* 1445).
De Arte de Saltandi et Choreas. Domenico di Piacenza (1446).
Choreographie. Phillippe Beauchamp (*Paris* 1671).
Choreographie. Raoul Feuillet (*Paris* 1700).
Principes de Choreographie. Charles Clement (*Paris* 1771).
Die Tanzkunst und Tanzfigurin. Karl Gerster (*Spier* 1780).
Choreographie. F. Guillemen (*Paris* 1784).
Code of Terpsichore. Carlo Blasis (*London* 1830).

This short list excludes works dealing with systems or methods of dance notation, though there are many books claiming the title of Choreography, which do not deal with creative dance design, but centre on this record of dance form. Later works comment on Choreography, but none appear to explain rational principles of movement, or outline any sound theories. The reader will observe that the word "choregraphy" has not been used by these authorities. They retain a sense of the Greek origin, from *choros* (XOROS) and *graphos*, in line with similar modern terms, such as geo-graphy, geo-logy, geo-metry, and the like.

The Hindu term is *tantra-vidya*, or "worship-knowledge" in the sense of knowing the "why and wherefore" of the ritual process. With it is assumed a knowledge of geometry (for the floor diagrams, many newly made at home for each celebration) and music, chosen for its proper occasion.* Our modern term *choreography* is not present, since ritual is traditional and does not demand any new variations of main principles, though latitude is permitted in individual rendering. The spectacle evolved is highly symbolic, and is yet dramatic in form. Modern Kathakali is now performed with no floor patterns.

The choreography, which we use for Ballet and Modern Dance, contains traces and traditions of most preceding styles of ordered dance form in groups. At once more complex, and yet more simple, it is useful to examine these contributory modes that appear in various styles of world dance. By knowing something of meaning and purpose we can more easily recognise the most expressive forms of gesture and mime, position and movement, which when integrated under the sovereign control of rhythm, produce the most impressive and moving works of art in our modern Theatre.

* * *

Choreography is at once an art, a science, and a craft; its form becomes simultaneously pictorial or plastic in visual terms; energic in emotional content, and delicately varied in its technical language. These united elements give us the inclusive Grammar of the Dance. This, like all living modes of grammar, appears first as a natural development, based on national and local idioms of movement and meaning. We may, by inventive experiment, derive from a collection of gestures and steps, an expressional form that has the quality say of Zamenhof's artificial language, Esperanto. But it will not carry the immense vigour of the fundamental vital expression.

The choreographer must be trained, consciously, through long and varied experience of dance forms, all centred on Theatre; and formulated by infinitely delicate rhythmic control, entwined with parallel musical form and structure. Merely to know the French names of steps, routines, or gestures, will take us no further than the medical student's knowledge of bones, muscles and organs by Latin terms. Though some knowledge of psychology is useful, it does not give us the genuine empathy that creates form in art works.

We can best study usefully the sources of dance form, always coupled with dance meaning; most especially in due relation to dance location by season and by place. The choreography of folk dances has a rich treasury of rhythmic gesture and movement, carrying many strands from the religious form to the economic purpose of motion. Church or temple ritual has been a profound and dominant controller in solemn modes of group movement; which, like the music by chant or by instrument that accompanies the liturgy, is infused with powerful rhythmic meaning. This emotional rhythm links bodily movement with aural impression, thus uniting the ritual group into a single organisation. Here we have a notable example to follow, in ballet: the triple forms in three arts must be fused into one Theatre work of art. In rare examples, at its height, the art of ballet offers one of the richest rewards in modern cities; and in the distant villages of the Orient we can find something of this same unique mastery of fully integrated theme and expression. We know it instantly when we see it; and we can never forget such experience.

To trace the precise foundations of our modern Theatre choreography, we have to analyse the wider components of dance, in which change from "natural movement" to "art movements" develop. They are closely linked in origin though separate in practice. Let us refer to our varied sources.

In addition to the school traditions of court or classical ballet, we must examine their origins in the West European Court Ballet of ceremony and manners. These are wider than is usually believed; while the far older multiple streams of Folk Dance return continually to enliven the narrowed course of theatre ballet. Folk festivals, both native and foreign, have contributed their profound influence to the treasury of dance. Balanced with these, we turn to the ancient rituals of temple and church—also using dance in wider measure than is commonly assumed. As foreign sources that impinge upon our native dance customs and ceremonial, we may take it that their influence in dance is as continuous as those we hear in spoken language or instrumental music.

When we have examined these varied traditions, we have to deal with the conscious factors so much discussed today: the abstracted elements that we include within the formal functions of dance. These allied arts include choreographer as planner of dance, in position, and movement; the composer or arranger, as the musical director, controlling that vastly important element of rhythm with tempo and inflection; and the scenic painter-artist, whose role is now extended beyond his original contribution of costume and mask, to the control of colour in costume, in lighting, and in setting.

Earlier, these functions of three artists were either combined in one man (the *choregus* in Hellas), or operated under the cognisance of a supreme poet. The choreographer was one of three artists. Later the ballet master (such as Petipa) could demand music by the bar (as he did from Tchaikovsky) but was himself under the orders of a theatre director and a master of literature as librettist. That peak did not often appear; so that now we are back, with the dancer-designer wanting to control the entire ballet, though again aided or hampered by a director, and again moving in uneasy co-operation an orchestra conductor who is rarely himself an original composer. The painter comes in,—though not always, for he is re-abstracted at times—on a later level. All he is asked to do is to devise danceable costumes and an uncluttered stage space. No artist can touch the concoctions called programmes.

Many writers, such as Noverre, have been unsatisfied with what they have seen, in contrast with what they knew could be done with the same available material, but few have reached a full analysis of the theatre-problem of ballet on stage. On the contrary, religious dance, as a ritual expression, has been mastered and understood in its formal relation. Space here available will not permit of exhaustive explanations with full proofs and adequate references, but it is hoped that sufficient will be given to enable the interested student to follow up the subject, in conjunction with the essential experience as spectator and performer, necessary to integrate the whole problem.

* *Charm of Indian Art* (illustrated). By W. E. G. Solomon, London, 1929.

NEXT MONTH. Part Two: "The Choreographer."

AUSTRALIAN
TOUR
1957

THE AUSTRALIAN TOUR 1957

Photo on Page 11

Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes arriving at Mascot Airport

PERHAPS the hardest thing in the world to live up to is a famous name, and so it not surprising that on the day following her arrival in Sydney and speaking at a press and radio luncheon, Dame Margot Fonteyn said "the wonderful welcome we have received has made us all rather worried. Will we be able to live up to the high expectations that you have of us?"

Up to that moment she had scarcely had time to think, for she stepped off the B.O.A.C. plane at Mascot Airport to cope with seven tape-recorded radio interviews, three television telecasts and newsreel films, and a barrage of questions from reporters during a gruelling two-hour session.

It was clear from the start that Australians intended awarding the British ballerina a V.I.P. welcome, and their press had certainly given her coverage from every angle since the first reports of her proposed visit appeared in December, 1956. From that time onwards regular newspaper and magazine articles appeared, and for those who were not interested in ballet there were stories of her Dior wardrobe, speculations on what she would be paid for her month's visit, and her marriage and private life in story and pictures.

"Margot is a big draw" the *Brisbane Telegraph* informed its readers on the 1st of May "the rush for air bookings to Sydney for Miss Fonteyn's performances surpassed the exodus from here to Melbourne for the Olympic Games."

On May 7th the *Sydney Telegraph* commented "Postal bookings closed yesterday, with just about every one of the 2,000 seats booked for every performance . . . and the first curtain doesn't rise until May 25th."

With scenes reminiscent of the Bolshoi visit to London, fifteen hundred people queued during one of the coldest nights of the year to buy these tickets.

And so the stage was set, the big build-up was on, but whatever Dame Margot and Michael Somes felt as they approached this country for the first time, they certainly acquitted themselves well with the press. "Smiling 'Queen of the Ballet' "—"Distinguished Visitor"—"La Fonteyn is here" ran the headlines, and they went on to say that Dame Margot had a composed demeanour, a wide smile and absolutely no public tricks whatever.

And obviously it was Dame Margot's natural simplicity of manner that impressed everyone with whom she came in contact. "Dame Margot is the Toast" headlined the *Melbourne Age*, and continued "although the ballerina has been in Australia less than 24 hours she has completely captivated the city."

A crowd of two-thousand people milled outside the Empire Theatre on the night of May 25th, causing a traffic jam, and 40 minutes before the show began the police had to ask the theatre manager to open all theatre entrance doors to relieve the congestion. "It was," said the *Herald* "the most glittering, glamorous, diamond-studded occasion Sydney has seen since the Royal Tour in 1934."

On a stage piled high with floral tributes Dame Margot took twelve curtain calls after she had danced *Swan Lake Act* 2 with the Borovansky Ballet, but critics are the same the world over.

R.R. in *The Sydney Herald* found the experience "a disillusioning one . . . her Odette was too rounded, too girlish . . . " Somes "brought little of the essential princely bearing and courtliness to his part" but when Fonteyn danced *Aurora's Wedding* the same writer "hastened to acclaim" her. She possessed "an innate beautifully animated quality which dwells within a technique which one forgets while watching the beauty of her dancing" and on this occasion he wrote of Somes "as 'Prince Desire' was ever her watchful, protective, lovingly gentle partner. As a soloist he was graceful, light, elevated with airy beatings of his feet in the air."

"The quiet beauty of her performance left a deep impression" commented Constance Cummins in the *Telegraph, Brisbane*.

"She infused new life into the ballet, her Odette was frail and poignant, but passion, no, that was the one feature I missed in her

AUSTRALIANS SAY GOODBYE

Photo this page:

The Final Curtain
at
Her Majesty's Theatre,
Melbourne

left to right:

Edouard Borovansky

Margot Fonteyn

Bryan Ashbridge

Michael Somes

Sir Frank Tait
Managing Director of
J. C. Williamson Theatres Ltd.

and

The Borovansky Ballet

otherwise superb performance" was the verdict of J. B. Russell in *The Sun, Sydney*.

Eunice Gardiner in *The Telegraph, Sydney*, gave it as her opinion that "in her dancing of *Swan Lake* Margot Fonteyn gave Sydney ballet lovers an experience to remember for a lifetime."

I have only quoted a few at random, in my Australian press book there are some two hundred and fifty cuttings, ranging from a single column inch to three or four pages. One thing is quite clear from them all, this visit caused a stir and a great deal of interest. Wherever Dame Margot went people flocked to see her, one day she ventured out to tea and caused a traffic jam and cessation of business in the stores nearby. Despite her heavy schedule she managed to attend a race meeting as guest of honour, the proceeds of which went to assist two hospitals, and a special matinée performance was given with the Borovansky Ballet Company to an audience of 1,800 children, half of whom were ballet students and the other 900 were handicapped children drawn from twenty-six hospitals and organisations. There were those who could not see the ballet because they were blind, there were those who could not hear the music because they were deaf, but they all went wild with delight, calling Fonteyn back again and again for nineteen curtain calls.

When the dancers went on to Melbourne the interest was just as great, a queue of a thousand people formed to buy tickets, and the booking agents had to open at midnight to cope with the waiting crowd, some of them had been there for thirty-four hours.

Bryan Ashbridge was of course a principal with the Borovansky Ballet before he came to England to join the Royal Ballet (then the Sadler's Wells Ballet) and Australians were anxious to see him again, especially as he was partnering Rowena Jackson, ballerina of the Royal Ballet, making her first appearance in Australia. They both created a very favourable impression.

Of their dancing in *Don Quixote* the *Sydney Telegraph* wrote " the pas de deux threatens to steal the show."

Truth, Sydney "New Zealand can take a bow for Rowena Jackson and Bryan Ashbridge, the pas de deux was an interlude of perfection, two rubies in a velvet case. Precise, thrilling, their artistry incontestable."

But R.R. in *The Sydney, Herald* was again disgruntled, this time with Rowena. He found in her "fouettés and the poised arabesques taken from her partner there was a lack of balance and sense of strain."

And *The Sun, Sydney* found that they "gave an exhibition of dazzling virtuosity."

There is no doubt that Dame Margot's visit to Australia will be a great boost to ballet there "the greatest stimulus ballet in Australia has had" said that pioneer of Australian ballet—Mr. Edouard Borovansky.

And to the ballerinas and corps de ballet of the Borovansky Ballet this visit meant a great deal too. Peggy Sager and Kathleen Gorham, the ballerinas of the Company have themselves received tremendous acclamation for their recent season in Adelaide, but they felt Dame Margot's visit was the most wonderful thing that could have happened for ballet, that a high ideal has been set, and a great honour accorded to their Company.

Typical of the letters I have received from Australia is the one from a reader in New South Wales "I was only able to go twice, but it is a memory to be carried through the years, and will remain as vivid as the De Basil seasons, nearly twenty years ago, are to me now."

And to conclude I will quote Dame Margot's own words to me just before she left for the five month's tour of America "Australian interest in ballet is quite remarkable. It is a country which seems genuinely anxious to develop culturally and artistically, and it's climate is good for the development of dancers."

And, of course, the final word should come from Sir Frank Tait, Managing Director of J. C. Williamson Theatres Limited, who made the arrangements to take the dancers out to Australia, and shouldered the big financial responsibility:

"The tour was an overwhelming artistic and financial success."

ESTELLE HERF.

Bjorn Holmgren and Marianne von Rosen in the pas de deux from the Fête des Fleurs de Genzano. *Photo: Olofsdotter.*

Interviewed by
ELISABETHE CORATHIEL

BJORN HOLMGREN

IT took a long time for the idea of ballet dancing as a profession for men to gain universal acceptance, if not popularity, in this country. In Scandinavia the attitude was a little different. People included stage dancing for men among the "artistic professions" which were looked upon half enviously—and perhaps just a trifle disdainfully in the "sour grapes" connection—by the rank and file of the public who preferred less chancy ways of making a livelihood, but it was not condemned on the score of being effeminate. This is perhaps because of a national folk lore which brackets folk-dancing with poetry, song and saga as a natural expression of the nation's soul. The very conditions of life in that northern climate make physical fitness a thing to strive for; and this naturally encourages athletic exercises of all kinds, as well as sports that call for muscular prowess, sports like ski-ing and skating. I asked Björn Holmgren if these were a help to the dancer.

"Only in so far as they help to break down prejudice against male dancers," he replied. "Actually, the muscular action involved is so entirely different that dancers are not encouraged to ski or skate. It is bad for them. In dancing everything depends upon fluidity of movement; anything that disturbs the rhythm of movement must be avoided" he said. It was news to him that in England athletes are now seriously taking up ballet in certain branches of athletic training, as a means of controlling movement and speeding up response. He thought there might be something in this, but definitely rules out strenuous sports or even ordinary gymnastics from the dancers routine.

"Of course, this does not mean that the dancer can skip his own exercises," he said. "Indeed, he has to work very hard, and we in Sweden especially have found this out. Our national ballet, despite an excellent start, had got 'bogged down' until Mary Skeaping came, bringing the ideals and the enthusiasm of Britain's Sadler's Wells with her. She made great changes. We had to work much harder and more intensively. She inspired us with her own enthusiasm, her own high standard, and taught us very well. In a few months people began to see the difference. As far as male dancers are concerned, I agree that it is a good career, and one not yet overcrowded, so that there is still plenty of work—but only if the candidates are clever, and able to offer talent which is out-of-the-ordinary. It is no use a male dancer thinking he can get by, even in the present favourable state of the market, with qualities which only just touch the 'competence' mark—we have already arrived at the period of superlatives. For the man who can claim superlative skill, there certainly are fame, laurels and fortune in store."

Especially this is true in Sweden, where the Arts enjoy very particular Royal patronage. It is because the lead comes from the King himself that the art of ballet is being taken up so enthusiastically in that country. And the King's sincere interest is spreading to other Royal circles. When our own Queen visited Stockholm last year, it was King Gustaf's suggestion that Mary Skeaping should create a ballet specially for her. The resulting work proved a landmark to all concerned and brought high compliments from our Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. Mr. Holmgren's presentation to these distinguished Royal guests, and later to Queen Juliana of Holland, when he received a Dutch decoration are among his most precious memories. Not that he is at all out of his depth among royalty. So closely is the life of the Swedish royal house interwoven with the artistic achievements of Stockholm in every sphere that Björn is only one of a noted family in close attendance upon royalty.

"How I first got into ballet is quite a story," he told me. "My brother, while still quite young, began to enjoy a certain fame in Stockholm as an amateur child actor. He was constantly in demand; and this gave him the entry to the theatre. He was anxious to share this privilege with me, and the shows he thought I would most appreciate were those in which dancing occurred. He was quite right: I became a complete balletomane. From watching others, I began to make attempts at dancing on my own. It must have seemed that I showed some promise; for I was accepted by the Royal Ballet School at the age of ten, and, after eight years' training, I began to appear in the regular repertoire at the Royal Opera. In 1946 I was appointed premier danseur, and in 1952 I became ballet master."

And the "boy-actor" brother? He is now Stockholm's leading man-milliner, creating marvellous hats for Royal ladies and for the cream of Scandinavian Society!

Björn Holmgren takes his art very seriously. Thoroughly grounded in classical technique, he has an inborn gift for mime, and excels as a character dancer. That is why he creates such a deep impression in any ballet with a folk-loristic twist. He is not rabidly "patriotic" in a way that he thinks national Swedish works should be stressed at the expense of classical favourites; he thinks that tradition rests firmly on classical favourites, and always will do so. At the same time he appreciates the eagerness for change, which ballet audiences in many countries register, and he agrees that there are in Swedish folk-lore and literature many themes which, while typically "national" will probably appeal on their novelty-value to a wider public. The quaint *Prodigal Son*, based on primitive peasant mural-paintings, is an excellent example. And there are lots more of a similar kind that may in future inspire Swedish choreographers.

His own ambition for the future is to become a recognised choreographer of the first rank. He is at present engaged in creating a new ballet which will be presented later in the year, and much of his brief "holiday" in London following the Swedish Ballet's television engagements, was spent in conference with his costume designer, Mrs. Gueye Rolf. They combed the town for new ideas!

Asked what he considered the most powerful weapon in the armament of a good male dancer, he unhesitatingly answered "Music. Without a sound knowledge and understanding of music, no dancer can hope to achieve much," he said.

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New Books

Come to the Ballet. By Pigeon Crowle. (*Faber*, 15s.).

Books on the ballet more often than not can be classified under two headings—Highbrow or Juvenile. Being such an ephemeral and purely visual art it is very difficult for an authority on the subject to capture on paper the finer points and keep the uninitiated reader still with them.

Pigeon Crowle has the gift of putting down on paper the magic of the stage, of opening one's eyes to hitherto unnoticed passages in the various ballets she describes. Even if you do not understand ballet terms (although there is a glossary of same) you cannot fail to enjoy Miss Crowle's latest book *Come to the Ballet*.

She tells the story of eleven ballets, including *Prince of the Pagodas, Firebird, Petrushka, Cinderella, La Péri, The Three Cornered Hat, Spectre de la Rose* and *Casse Noisette*. Nine of these ballets are in the current repertoire of the Royal Ballet, and three are danced regularly by Festival Ballet. *Casse Noisette* (*The Nutcracker*) is to be produced by Festival Ballet at the Royal Festival Hall, London, as a special Christmas presentation this year, and the whole production will be under the personal supervision of Alexandre Benois, the first time for the original version in its entirety to be presented in this country.

I much enjoyed the anecdotes, woven into the various chapters, of the people concerned with the making of the ballets. Of Svetlana Beriosova, at the rehearsal of *The Prince of the Pagodas*, coming adrift from her airborne entourage and floating back into the wings. (I remember so well how we all kept our fingers crossed on the first night). Of Benjamin Britten when asked by Cranko the choreographer to advise him where to find a young composer for the music of this ballet, replying "Will I do?"

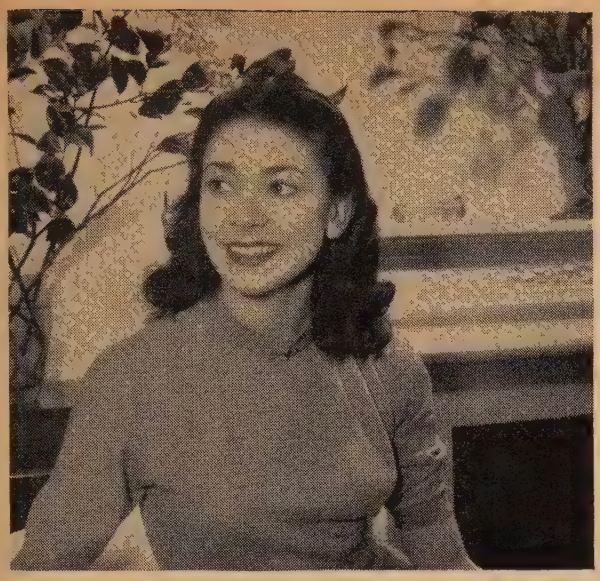
There are many such intimate pen portraits that take one behind the scenes, and show us the dancers, choreographers and musicians as lovable human beings, though sometimes difficult to contend with at the time! My own favourite is of Bakst and his loving care for small details and props of the ballet being produced. The birdcage had been added to the props of *Le Spectre de la Rose* at the last moment by Bakst. "Much agitated he had wandered about the stage, carrying the cage in his hand, as he tried to discover the perfect position for it and one to which no objections could be raised. The window near the bed was the obvious place but that was impossible because Nijinsky had to enter through it; the other window was also out of the question because here he made his exit, it could not stand on the table because of the embroidery. The curtain was already due to go up and still no home had been found for the canary. At length, though not completely satisfied and when everyone was very nearly desperate, Bakst hung it under the cornice. Later on, the cage with its stuffed bird mysteriously disappeared."

Publishers have been known to make the claim that "this book is suitable for all ages." I doubt if such a book would become a best seller. I prophesy that Pigeon Crowle's *Come to the Ballet* will added to the list of her other "best sellers" because it does contain something for everyone interested in ballet.

There are over twenty varied and well chosen illustrations from photographs, including a delightful cover page and inset in colour of Margot Fonteyn in *Sylvia*, and some attractive drawings by Charles Stewart at the beginning of each chapter, two of which are used to illustrate this review.

E.H.

(*Continued on page 18*)



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Felix Fonteyn]

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continued from page 16

New Books

Reviewed by
PIGEON CROWLE

New Girl at Ballet School. By Constance M. White. (*Hutchinson, 8s. 6d.*).

The new girl is a child of the circus, different and difficult, and her love for a little dog, also a "circus child" gives the story an unusual and rather touching twist.

I asked a young dancer, a senior student at a well-known ballet school, to give me her opinion of this book. She told me she had much enjoyed it, and found its ballet background true to reality, though she felt that the use of "babes" for juniors and "tweenies" for intermediates struck a jarring note.

Costuming for the Modern Stage. By Laura Zirner. (*University of Illinois Press, U.S.A., $3*).

The theory of costume reduced to the essentials, with scenery and properties stylised to suit the simply-clad performer so that the art of the actor may make its impact untrammelled by conventional detail, is by no means new. But though this may be stimulating in the hands of the experienced producer, it can be fraught with many pitfalls for the amateur. However, the author's main intention is to evolve clothes generally useful for the theatre, and of particular interest to school and amateur groups seeking a theatrical creativity on their own level of skill and means.

The design of these "convertible costumes" is simple and ingenious. They consist of a series of garments based on certain fundamentals that have altered comparatively little down the ages and which, with the addition of simple trimmings, may be devised to represent any period or nationality required. This could be most helpful for crowds or choruses (so often clad in miserable assortments of left-over costumes). By looping, folding, gathering, and tying, a variety of effects are obtained from one basic garment. A long, full sleeve, for instance, loose or else gathered at the end with elastic, can be pushed up, rolled under, tied in several sections, puffed at the forearm or draped to the shoulder.

Diagrams and instructions are given for cutting out and making up. With such simplification, colour is all important, and there are some interesting colour charts.

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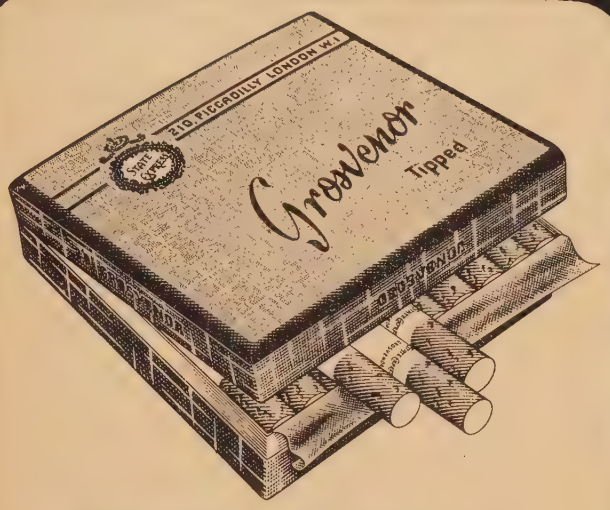

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New Recordings

Reviewed by BEDFORD CROWLE

A Musical Joke and Symphony K.201 (*Mozart*). *Philharmonia Orchestra* (*Cantelli*). *HMV. ALP*1461.

A Musical Joke, which Balanchine used last year when creating his ballet for the New York City Ballet, seems almost a misnomer for music that is so beautiful. Of course there are the obvious moments but really you have to see as well as hear the orchestra to appreciate the full import of the joke. This, however, should not deter you from getting this finely recorded disc as Cantelli's conducting on both sides is poised and sensitive.

Goyescas (*Granados*). *Soloists, Madrid Singers, Spanish National Orchestra* (*Argenta*). *Decca LXT*5338.

Although this is Granados' opera, I have included it as it is woven round his piano pieces of the same name, which have been used so often by visiting ballet companies from Spain. I reviewed Alicia de Larrocha's delicious performance of five of the piano pieces in October, 1956. On the present disc, the singers are good—*The Maiden and the Nightingale* may not come up to the standard of perfection of Victoria de los Angeles, HMV. DB21069, but nevertheless their account of the whole opera is possibly more characteristically Spanish and it cannot fail to be of great interest to admirers of the composer.

The Garden of Fand (*Bax*). A Shropshire Lad (*Butterworth*). *Hallé Orchestra* (*Barbirolli*). *Pye CCL*31000.

Bax's picture of the sea enchanted by Celtic fairies and sprites was choreographed by Ashton for his *Picnic at Tintagel*. This is the only LP, and I think you will agree that Barbirolli has been successful as it is not an easy score to interpret, and the recording is clear. I do not criticise his treatment of *A Shropshire Lad* but I prefer Sir Adrian Boult's.

Wanderer Fantasie (*Schubert*). Sonatas No. 2 and 3 (*Prokofiev*). *Gary Graffman* (*piano*). *RCA. RB*16015.

Many of us were a little bewildered and uncertain after the first night of Ashton's *Wanderer*, and decor and costumes added to the confusion. The audience's conversation during the interval was an entertainment in itself. The pas de deux for Pamela May and Michael Somes was an oasis of real beauty. This young American pianist gives a strong and well-considered performance, while lyrical qualities come out in the Prokofiev. Unfortunately the piano is a trifle hard.

Symphony No. 1 (*Shostakovitch*). Scythian Suite (*Prokofiev*). *French National Radio Orchestra* (*Markevitch*). *Columbia* 33*CX*1440.

Although Massine's ballet, *Rouge et Noir*, to Shostakovitch's symphony has a philosophical theme, it might be enjoyed even more as simple abstract ballet of line and colour—Henri Matisse having designed the decor and costumes. Prokofiev's suite was the beginning of a large balletic project for Diaghilev but it was completely dropped. Markevitch gives a brilliant account of each work and the recording is particularly clear.

Four Impromptus Op. 142 and Sonata in A, Op. 120 (*Schubert*). *Bela Siki* (*piano*). *Columbia* 33*CX*1445.

It was from works of Schubert, including these impromptus, that Lifar selected the music for his ballet, *Variations*. You will remember how effectively it introduced and showed off each of the ballerinas when the Paris Opéra Ballet was over here. There is everything to commend in Bela Siki's playing, particularly in the sonata which is probably the best recorded version.

Coppelia and Sylvia.

Philips have now issued in their Favourite Music Series, SBL5203, their recordings of excerpts from these ballets and the ballet music from *Faust* which I reviewed in April, 1955. Fournet gives good, typically French renderings so that the disc is a bargain but the sleeve notes are appalling. However, if you do not want the *Faust* you may well consider Monteux conducting the Boston S.O. on HMV. ALP1475. He gives you more items from the two ballets and I have a preference for the fuller and richer tones he draws from his orchestra.

Festival Ballet.

One of the new ballets that this young and spirited company gave us last season was Lichine's *Concerti*. It is not great but in its modest way, it has something and we are lucky to have two recordings of the music of the first half, Marcello's very charming *Oboe Concerto*. A slight criticism may be levelled at the oboe's nasal tone on Decca LX3100 but I found it had its attraction. Being a ten inch disc there is only one other work, a Vivaldi bassoon concerto, whereas Brunswick AXTL1042 includes interesting and pleasing works by Bonporti, Cambini and Rossini. They are records that must be chosen by yourself as both can be recommended.

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Block, Canvas, Pk. Wht. or Blk. ..	12	6
Unblck. Canvas, Pk. Wht. or Blk. ..	10	6
Blocked White Leather and all colours ..	18	0
Unblck., Best Quality Coloured Leather in Red, Blk., Pk., Blue or any other colour	16	6

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Young Dancers

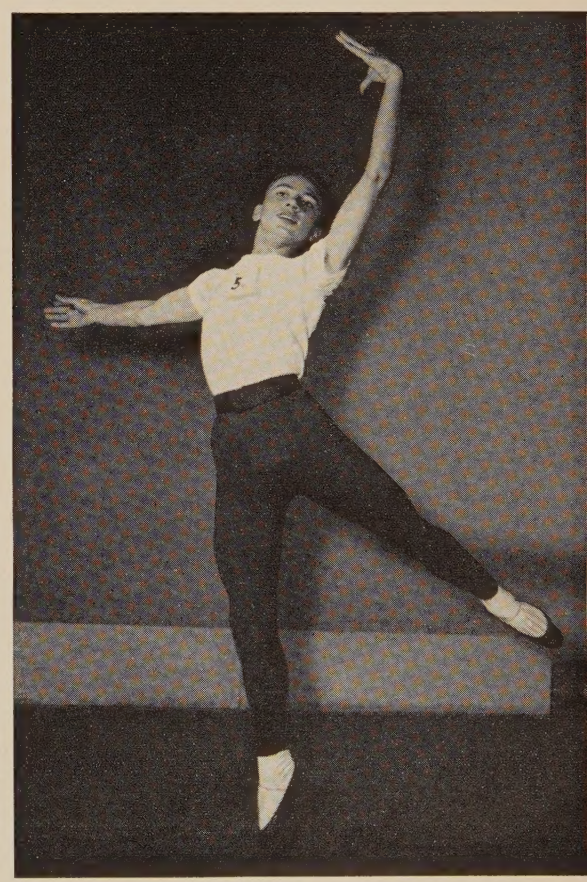
Pupils of the North London Ballet Circle oto right) having been guest artists with Helen y's show in June this year, were preparing an evening of ballet, in aid of the Forces Help ciety, during November. Unfortunately Miss rra Greenlaw, the principal, and many of the pils succumbed to the influenza epidemic and show has had to be postponed until February t year. All the girls seen in this photograph medallists. Michele Spenser (front left) ving had successes in the R.A.D. awards also n the Circle's Challenge Cup for the second r. Christina Michael (extreme right) who has y been dancing 18 months, has gained Hons. in A.D. primary, and several other awards luding the Circle Festival Cup and choreo- phic school prize. She is only nine years of age.

CANADA

A scene from the ballet *Les Ballons* performed on CBC Television Montreal, with Tommy Scott from Montreal as "the Boy with the Balloons" and pupils of Le Duc School of Ballet in Ottawa. The choreographer of this ballet, Heino Heiden, runs a weekly children's programme on the English speaking TV, CBMT, which is entitled "In the Storybook". The programme has been shewn all over Canada and has met with great success.

BALLET SCHOLARSHIP FOR NOTTINGHAM BOY

Awarded only in the event of conspicuous merit being shown, a Royal Academy of Dancing's Leverhulme Scholarship has been awarded to 14-year-old Michael Betts, of 54 Watnall Road, Hucknall, Nottingham. Photo: Brian Worth.



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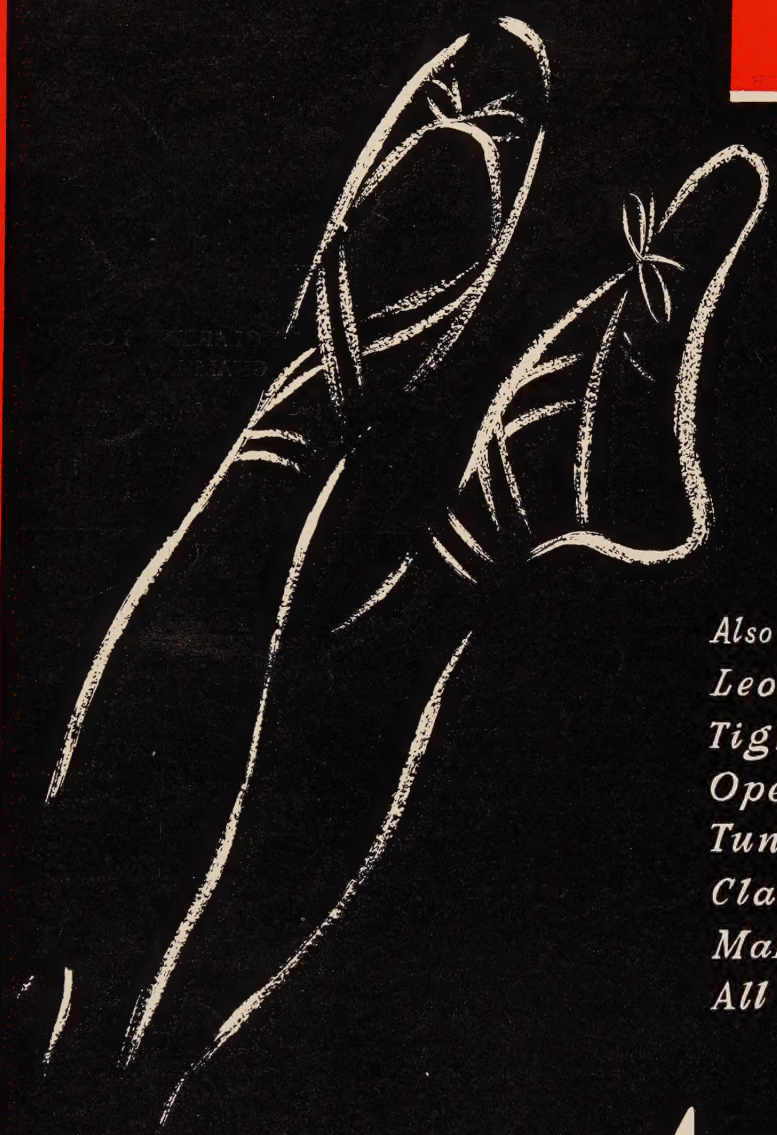

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